

## [John Healy & wife]

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Subject — The Shoemaker of Lynn [1938-9?] Mass. 12/29/38

Section [?] [10?]

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[People don't genrally know it, but a lotta funny things is responsible fur changin' the style a shoes. Them there archiologists fur instunce, an' wars, an' the automobile, an' kid's wearin' shoes in summer 'stead a goin' barefoot like we usta when we suz young 'uns.?)

[?] “ King Tut, he wuz the fella that ruined hell outa the shoe business in Lynn and everywhere else. Fur when they dug that old king up, some wise guy got it in his head ta make sandals like he wore. That revolutionized the whole industry. [?] Ya know, before that, If a fella come in the shops in the winter time wearin' low shoes, we'd all thought he wuz either right on his uppers or that he was crazy. Nobody wore low shoes in the winter time in them days. If we seen a fella wearin' 'im we thought we oughta pass the hat aroun' fur him. Trans. to p. 2.

[‘twuz the same way with the hat industry, and a lotta other industrys too. Everybody got the craz a wearin' things like they wore when King Tut wuz livin!?) [?] “ I've always thought they'd oughta a left that old guy lay in peace. 'twuz sure bad luck ta disturb him. And I'm a thinkin' that them that had anything ta do with diggin' him up, got their pay fur it too, 'cause somethin' happened ta each one a 'em. 'twuz said the old fella hisself saw to 2 that, fur

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some thought there wuz some kind a poison there on his tomb, that caused 'em all ta die sooner er later. That might jest be superstition but I always thought there wuz somethin' in it. "At any rate, that wuz the beginnin' a low shoes fur general all year 'roun wear. # Before that the only kinda low shoes fur men wuz the Newport Tie with two or three lacin's, and the Oxford, both jest used fur summer time. insert from p 1. [?] [?] p.1

"The general run a shoes fur men wuz high with eyelets clear up ta the top, or with eyelets half way up and hooks the rest a the way. There wuz also the Congress shoe with rubber or felt top too fur men.

"The women's ordinary dhoes shoes wuz either laced clear ta the top or they had buttons. Some had as high as eighteen buttons but the general run wuz fifteen buttons. Then there wuz the high laced boot fur women that reached jest below the knee, fur skatin' or mountain climbin'. They always had a common - sense heel. " There wuz also the " fat ankle ' . ." That wuz the ordnary high shoe fur old women. They wuz called " fat ankles " 'cause they wuz made big aroun' the ankles to fit the old ladies who had bigger ankles then they did when they wuz young. Some a them had no lacin's or buttons but wuz fixed, like the Congress shoe, with felt or cloth at the top, an' a band a elastic so they'd stretch so ya could get the foot in.

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Other " fat ankles " had buttons or lacin's. insert [attached?]

["There's some 'fat ankles' still made, but not near as many as usta be. Jest a few. Most old women today don't wanta be old, an' they wear the stylish shoes like the young ones. There's still a few though who know they're old an' don't care who else knows it, an' they want shoes ta cover their ankles in cold weather.?) [?]

" As I said before, wars had sometin' ta do with shoe styles too. A shoe that wuz popular fur a good many years wuz the Blucher Shoe, named after General Blucher a the Franco Prussian War in 1870. That wuz a shoe made 'specially ta wear long and be comfortable

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ta march in. Some a that type is still made. “ The automobile is another thing that caused a revolution in the shoe business. In the old days people usta walk a lot, and they had a have shoes that din't hurt as much. Wuz more important ta buy shoes that would wear fur walkin' an' would feel good than it wuz ta buy 'em fur style and then throw 'em away and get a new pair inside a month' two.

“An' today the average foot is narrar'r than it usta be. I think this is because it usta make aa kid's foot spread out when he went barefoot in summer. And that part that usta spread out went in length when he growed up, I guess. Least-ways the model foot fur women usta be 4B and now it's 5 or 5 1/2 A or double A. Seems like it's aristocratic ta have a long narra foot.

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[“Anuther thing that makes a woman's foot narra today, I think, is the high heels. They push the foot forward and so what usta go in width now goes in length.?) [??]

“Them model shoes I wuz jest talkin' about are the ones that's showed as sample, 'cause them sizes make the best appearance. [?] # We all usta like ta work on them model shoes 'specially model shoes fur we got more money fur them than the general run a shoes[.?] 'an only the best cutters could work on 'em. “ An a stitcher had ta be an A number one stitcher ta get ta work on 'em. A Too a fancy stitcher . he wuz. No [?] “ Besides gettin' more pay for this work, we liked ta do it, cause we got the very best material in the shop ta work with. A cutter'd get the best leather and a stitcher'd get the finest silk or mercerized.

[“Would ya like ta see the kind a spool the thread come on?”

Aunt Mary brought out from a closet a hugh spool, about twenty-five times the size of an ordinary spool of thread. She explained that her son who worked in a factory that closed down some twenty odd years ago, was given this and others like it, the day the shop closed its doors. [?]

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“That thread is over twenty years old, but it's as strong as kin be. I still unwind part of a it from time ta time , on a small spool and use it on my machine. Nothin' like it fur strength. That's mercerized.

“An' ya oughta see the diffrent colors a solk silk he brought home.” 5 [?] Uncle Jimmie interrupted here to continue his [narrative?] about samples. “ After the samples had been used ta show the styles, they'd be brought back ta the factory and sold cheap. If ya had the right size foot ya could always buy a good shoe cheap. All the shops had a sign out, ‘ Sample shoes fur sale. ‘ “ There usta be sixty pair a shoes to a case and seventy-two in a case a children's. We got the same price fur each kind, so naturally we liked to cut the grownup's. After a while it come down to thirty-six pair in a case and now, I guess, it's only twelve pair. “ That's cause in the old days, the shoes was standard and if a shoe store din't sell 'em one season, they could put 'em on the shelf 'till the next season. Now they gotta sell 'em all the same season they buy 'em, or they lose on 'em. “

“She wears low shoes” — When ya heard that said ‘bout a woman in winter time fifty years ago ya'd think she was either crazy or kinda immoral or maybe an actress. Streets wuz muddy and there wuzn't many sidewlaks sidewalks , an' a woman had to walk when she wuz goin' down town. She had to have somethin' comfortable to wade through the mud with. If she had more money then and